

Interracial News Service

A DIGEST OF TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN HUMAN RELATIONS

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SCHOOL DESEGREGATION —

MOVEMENT AND RESISTANCE

ARKANSAS — Four school districts in the state have been integrated. In the four there are 49 Negroes and 2,170 whites. At Hoxie, where integration went into effect without incident for three weeks, the school term was ended two weeks earlier than scheduled (some Arkansas schools open in mid-summer, the close in the early fall for the harvesting season) after a protest movement developed. Hoxie school board members blamed the uprising on "out-of-state influences." . . . the state official attitude on the Supreme Court decisions was reported as "neutral."

DELAWARE — The school year is opening with at least 21 of the 104 public school districts of all categories considering themselves desegregated, as against 12 in September, 1954. Opposition to desegregation was strong in the two counties of southern Delaware. Meanwhile the General Assembly failed to enact a \$44 million school construction bond issue bill because an attempt was made to cut from the bill specific references to Negro schools — objected to by bond attorneys. Official state policy is to press for desegregation.

KENTUCKY — The state began the school year with limited integration in at least 10 counties and four of the larger cities. One city, Lexington, said it would approve admission of Negroes to all schools "if they apply." Most of the areas involved were in eastern Kentucky. Louisville, with the largest proportion of Negroes, told petitioners that its plans were aimed at initiation of integration in the fall of 1956. . . . (It was) reported . . . that the official attitude toward Supreme Court decisions was: "Toward compliance, some now, the rest later."

MARYLAND — Some integration of white and Negro pupils was expected in seven of Maryland's 23 counties, in addition to Baltimore city which desegregated its schools last year. Admission of a few Negroes to white schools was considered a possibility in two other counties, while a tenth is admitting Negroes to two special schools for the handicapped. Some integration was reported possible also in five teacher colleges. The remaining counties will maintain segregated schools this year. Increased activity of "opposition" groups was noted. State policy calls for transition from segregation to desegregation "at the earliest practicable date."

MISSOURI — School authorities said 80 per cent of all Negro boys and girls will be in districts which have integrated pupils. A few additional districts have adopted integration plans during the summer; most districts which did not act a year ago are continuing segregation. The total number of districts now integrated is 114. . . . (It was) reported that the official attitude was "toward compliance."

OKLAHOMA — Full-scale desegregation was ordered in the Oklahoma City school system — the state's largest. Desegregation to at least some degree will be in effect this fall in at least 88 school districts out of 1,802. . . . (It was reported) that officially Oklahoma was moving "toward compliance."

TEXAS — More than 60 Texas school districts (in the western and southern portions of the state) begin the school year with some degree of integration. San Antonio reversed its plans and decided to wait a year. A district judge held at Big Spring that the state segregation law was invalid in the light of the Supreme Court decisions; state authorities will appeal. New Citizens Councils were organized in several

localities. . . . (It was reported that) official state attitude still is for local boards to go slow on desegregation but state authorities have not attempted to interfere in districts where integration has been ordered. . . .

WEST VIRGINIA — Court actions, one of them designed to bring about desegregation in Mercer County, loomed as school bells sounded. Kanawha, the most populous county, announced a two-year program involving desegregation of first, second and seventh grades this year. Desegregation has been started in 44 out of 55 counties. . . . (It was reported that) official attitude was "toward compliance."
(*Southern School News*, September 1955)

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In some states, special committees of lawyers are being set up to help any community that may be sued by Negroes for admission to schools. More than a dozen different kinds of organizations are springing up to fight for segregation. *Mississippi* and *Alabama* have citizens' councils. . . .

In some *Virginia* counties, controls have been clamped on the use of school funds to stop spending immediately if a court should order mixing in the schools. In *North Carolina*, while some communities are studying the problem of bringing Negroes into white schools, others are fighting suits for the admission of Negroes with State aid in the legal battle.

Numerous organizations are busily working against integration in *South Carolina*. Where Negroes petition for admission to schools, some local newspapers print the names of the petitioners and advise white citizens to study the lists carefully and ask the signers about their true intent and understanding of the situation. Newspapers report cases where some Negro signers have been fired, or, if tenant farmers, have been told they will not be needed after this crop season.

Georgia is requiring its teachers to sign an oath that they will uphold the State constitution which requires segregated schools. Petitions for integration are pending in several areas.

In *Florida*, where petitions for integration are on file in several counties, some officials are complaining that uncertainty over segregation is keeping the interest rates high on school bonds.

Alabama is tightening its laws to try to hold the line, and *Louisiana* has turned over \$100,000 to the State Attorney General to hire lawyers to fight integration suits on local levels. . . .

(*U. S. News & World Report*, Sept. 9)

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A non-factional citizens council was organized (in Atlanta) to fight for the preservation of segregation in Georgia. The move was under the joint direction of Gov. Griffin and Roy Harris.

Two hundred state leaders, of varied political factions, set up a States Rights Council of Georgia, Inc. . . .

(They) united in the move to fight "with legal methods only" for the preservation of racial segregation.

Former Gov. Talmadge was a leader in the organizational movement. . . .

Leaders of the Legislature, . . . were present and, by resolution, were declared automatic members of the States Rights Council.

Many members of the state's two school boards . . . were present and were enrolled in the council. . . .

At least two judges . . . were signed up.
House officials dotted the audience. . . .
One congressman, Rep. Jack Flynt of Griffin, became a member of the council.

State Democratic Chairman John Sammons Bell, National Committeeman Robert Elliott, and other state Democratic leaders also united with this council. . . .

The council said it will organize on a precinct level to fight for the preservation of constitutional government.

It said it repudiates the use of force, intimidation or any other unlawful or un-Christian means in the attainment of its objectives. It added that it deplores all such efforts by extremists of both races.

(*Atlanta Constitution*, September 24)

An organization of prominent North Carolinians was chartered (recently) to "maintain the purity and culture of the white race."

The organization, Patriots of North Carolina, Inc., filed a 234-page document of incorporation listing 356 charter members. Most are known in political, civic and business affairs.

The membership list includes several present and former state legislators, a former state Democratic chairman, a utilities commissioner, a highway commissioner, a former United States District Attorney, Mayors, city and town officials and county political figures.

The organization listed as among its objectives:

Maintenance of the "purity and culture of the white race" and of Anglo-Saxon institutions.

Promotion of peace, domestic tranquility and the best interest and general welfare of all citizens.

Encouragement and promotion of friendly racial relations and racial peace and goodwill. . . .

The group added it would work toward "maintaining the existing social structure in North Carolina, in which the two distinct races heretofore have lived as separate groups, and the value of educating the different races in separate schools."

(*N. Y. Times*, August 23)

Some 50 colored groups have united (in Houston, Texas) to ask the Justice Department to investigate the pro-segregation Texas Citizens Councils, branches of which are springing up all over the state.

The complaining group, known as the Harris County Council of Organizations, accuses Attorney General John B. Shepperd and Gov. Allen Shivers of lending aid and comfort to the racebaiting organizations.

The Harris County Council has asked that U. S. Attorney General Herbert Brownell instruct State Attorney General Shepperd to comply with his pledge of office to uphold the Constitution of the United States.

. . . a copy of the letter was sent to J. Edgar Hoover, director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and another to President Eisenhower.

Branches of the Citizens Councils, sole aim of which is to block implementation of the Supreme Court's decision calling for integration of schools, have been formed in Orange, Fort Worth, Kilgore, Big Springs and Dallas.

Practically all of these council branches have publicly sanctioned and urged economic pressure against colored citizens.

(*Afro-American*, Sept. 10)

REPORT — TWO-WAY INTEGRATION

There are now 118 students (110 Negro, 8 white) enrolled in 32 private undergraduate colleges in the South as a result of the National Scholarship Service and Fund for Negro Students' "two-way" integration project activities. They are being helped with \$25,000 worth of college scholarships, supplemented by \$12,000 in NSSFNS awards. During the past year, 35 Negro and 6 white students were enrolled in 19 newly interracial colleges, predominantly of the other race.

In a review of the project, the annual report for 1954-55 noted that integration in southern colleges, given the impetus of the Supreme Court decision, has moved ahead rapidly

where public opinion was favorable and authorities wished the law to be implemented. State and municipally controlled colleges in border states had only to open their doors and there were applicants.

In the private colleges, where integration is wholly voluntary, however, the "two-way" integration project has stimulated and accelerated the process. At the present rate of acceleration, it is believed that only two more years of special project efforts will be necessary. After that time, opportunities for Negro students in formerly all-white southern colleges can be absorbed into the agency's regular counselling and referral program.

"Reverse" integration in the private colleges, however, has been and will be a much longer-term problem. The pioneer white students with healthy motivations to attend predominantly Negro colleges still appear in extremely small numbers. The Department of Racial and Cultural Relations of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U. S. A. has continued its valuable collaboration with NSSFNS in the recruitment of these white students. . . .

(*Opportunity News*, October, 1955)

Racial segregation crumbled at the state university undergraduate level in the South . . . for the first time.

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill announced it will admit three academically-qualified Negroes to the undergraduate school for the fall term . . .

The decision was prompted by a Federal court order and the announcement was made after university trustees and William B. Rodman, Jr., state attorney general, failed to win stay of judgment of the order pending appeal to the U. S. Supreme Court. Rodman then advised the university to admit the Negroes.

Handed down by a special three-judge Federal court in Greensboro . . . the order requires the university to accept and process applications of any citizen of this state regardless of race or color. . . .

The historic announcement came in this statement issued by the University Chancellor Robert B. House and Acting President J. Harris Purks:

"Now that we have been advised by the attorney general of the action of the district court this morning and following his advice the university, having determined that these students are academically qualified, will now proceed to admit them."

. . . The court's ruling apparently also affects the two other branches of the consolidated University of North Carolina — North Carolina State College at Raleigh and Woman's College of the University at Greensboro.

(*Journal Herald*, Dayton, Ohio, Sept. 16)

ACTIVITY IN THE CHURCHES

Florida

Florida Presbyterian leaders proposed . . . that racial barriers be lifted in church membership and at church-supported colleges and adult and youth conferences.

The recommendations were made in resolutions adopted by the Synod of Florida, Presbyterian Church in the U. S. (Southern), at its 64th annual meeting. . . .

The adopted resolutions stated:

"That church sessions (boards of elders) be urged to consider making no distinction because of race in receiving members into the church."

"That the trustees of colleges under the control of this synod or its presbyteries be urged to consider removing any barriers of race in admitting students."

"That all directors of adult and youth conferences within our synod consider adopting an interracial policy where those of all races may be welcomed on an equal basis, and that these directors report their findings or actions to the next synod."

. . . After the resolutions had been approved, a group representing the minority delegates drafted a protest against the "spirit of the report" presented by the Division of Christian Relations.

An answer to this protest was formulated by a committee appointed by Moderator Walter B. Passiglia. . . .

Both the protest and the answer were received, adopted and written into the minutes after several hours of argument that threatened for a time to split the synod into two factions.

The synod's stand on segregation was commended by Dr. J. McDowell Richards, moderator of the Church's General Assembly and president of Columbia Theological Seminary.

...
(*Religious News Service*, Sept. 23)

Old Mystic, Conn.

The parishioners of the Old Mystic Methodist Church formally welcomed to their pulpit a 33 year-old Negro they had chosen unanimously to be their spiritual leader. It was the first time in Methodist annals that a Negro had become minister of an all-white congregation.

The Rev. Simon P. Montgomery, a native of Pineville, S. C., conducted his inaugural service at 11 A. M. in the neat white-clapboard church that has stood for more than a century. . . .

Roland Avery, chairman of the congregation's board of trustees, said that the church had chosen the Rev. Mr. Montgomery because "we just wanted a good pastor."

The question of the new minister's race or color was not even mentioned when the selection committee met. . . .

The Right Rev. John Wesley Lord, Resident Bishop of the Boston Area of the Methodist Church, formally approved the appointment. He and other Methodist leaders have voiced the view that it is a major step in long efforts to drive a wedge into the Church's Central Jurisdiction. The Central Jurisdiction is a nongeographic all-Negro grouping, and its continued existence, these leaders assert, results in a nonwanted racial distinction within Methodism.

The Rev. Mr. Montgomery, . . . is still a member of the South Carolina branch of the Central Jurisdiction. . . .

In Norwich the Rev. Mr. Hutchinson, the new minister's superior, asserted that he not only believed that the Old Mystic Church had chosen wisely but that he wanted the Methodists to go a step further.

"Wouldn't it be a good idea, now," he asked, "if one of our Negro congregations called a white minister to serve it? It's time now to make it reciprocal."

(*New York Times*, Oct. 3)

Dayton, Ohio

Protestant churches in this city (Dayton, Ohio) of 275,000 are lagging behind industry, schools and other elements of the community in integrating Negroes and whites, according to a study made for the Church Federation of Greater Dayton.

The findings, based on replies to a questionnaire from 120 of the city's 200 Protestant churches, were presented at the first Greater Dayton Institute on Church and Race.

They indicated that the churches:

1. Are not facing the issue of integration with a "positive and aggressive policy and program." Eighty-one churches reported they had no definite racial policy.

2. Have not implemented, in specific situations, statements favoring integration adopted by their denominations. Only one of the 114 white churches replying to the questionnaire has Negro members, . . .

3. Are maintaining a "barrier to integrated housing" by their "segregation pattern." Five white churches have moved from the edge of the Negro housing area and two others are in the process of such a move.

4. Are more willing to express "a policy of acceptance" toward Negroes when they are located in areas having no Negro residents.

5. Are dying in the midst of very dense populations. . . .

The institute adopted a resolution calling upon delegates to implement denominational policies of social justice and racial integration in their local churches.

(*Religious News Service*, Sept. 28)

Principle and Practice — ?

The Louisville Conference of the Methodist Church adopted a report saying that racial discrimination has no place in the church, then went on record in favor of keeping the Central Jurisdiction, a segregated division to which only colored members belong.

The conference will pass on its recommendations to the General Conference which meets in 1956, and where the issue of the Central Jurisdiction is expected to cause heated discussion.

The Louisville Conference, representing some 100,000 Methodists in Kentucky, voted to petition the General Conference to "take no steps toward abolishing the Central Jurisdiction nor any action amending the present plan of jurisdictional conferences." . . .

However, the conference did vote a petition to allow the General Conference to liberalize "permissive legislation" to allow individual jurisdictions to absorb colored churches and to admit colored members from the Central Jurisdiction.

The conference called on the trustees of all Methodist institutions, including schools and colleges, in Kentucky to report to the 1956 session on "exactly what is their policy on the matter of racial segregation and integration."

"We insist again that racial discrimination has no place in the Christian fellowship of which the Methodist Church is a part. . . ."

(*Afro-American*, September 17)

ABOUT FAIR EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

Ten years have passed since New York State passed its law prohibiting discrimination in employment, yet repeated surveys show that most commercial employment agencies are willing to service orders for stenographers that specify that only "white Protestants" will be accepted. This conclusion is based on the fourth of a series of surveys conducted by the Commission on Law and Social Action of the American Jewish Congress. They show that the proportion of agencies accepting such orders fell substantially between 1946 and 1949 but has not declined and in fact has slightly increased since then. In the 1955 survey, 222 commercial agencies in Manhattan were called. Of these, 156 or 70.3% accepted the order.

. . . The American Jewish Congress surveys have been conducted in 1946, 1949, 1952 and 1955. . . .

In the 1955 survey, as in previous surveys, telephone calls were made to all the "white collar" employment agencies listed in the Manhattan Classified Telephone Directory, omitting those whose names indicated that they do not supply stenographers. The caller, without revealing his or her identity, asked whether the agency could provide "a white Protestant Stenographer." The nature of the order was made clear by repetition. The agency's response was carefully noted and recorded in detail immediately after the call was completed.

In the 1955 survey, 313 agencies were called. Of these, 222 gave responses that could be used. Of these 156 (70.3%) stated that they would attempt to fill the discriminatory request. Fourteen of these accepted the order with hesitation and some made comments such as that they were "not supposed to take such orders," indicating that they knew the request was in violation of the law. Others were less hesitant, such as the one at which the person answering the phone said, "Lady, you are calling the right place." The remaining 66 agencies (29.7%) refused to honor the request. Thirty-one of these told the caller that the request was against the law and nine agencies lectured the caller on the evils of discrimination and nine agencies lectured the caller on the evils of discrimination and prejudice.

(*Report from Commission on Law and Social Action*, American Jewish Congress, March 25)

The President's Committee on Government Contracts, headed by Vice President Nixon, took a preliminary step today toward ending discrimination in employment in the transportation industry. The 15-member group unanimously agreed to call leaders of railroads, airlines, steamship companies and labor unions into conference to discuss the problem. A spokesman said the aim was to lay the ground for an order requiring nondiscrimination clauses in all government transportation contracts.

The meeting is to be conducted either by a subcommittee on common carriers, headed by Secretary of Labor Mitchell, or by a special subcommittee the vice president may appoint.

The committee acted on a complaint by the Urban League of New York charging racial discrimination in the hiring of

airline employes. The league proposed extension to the airlines of the committee's general policy of requiring government contracts to contain a clause barring employment discrimination.

Committee sources said members were "in complete accord" with the league's position and hoped to extend the policy to the entire transportation industry. . . . (*Atlanta Constitution*, the entire transportation industry. . . . (*Atlanta Constitution*, Sept. 21)

JUSTICE — INTIMIDATION — TERROR

The reign of terror against Negro citizens in Mississippi is under investigation by the Department of Justice for a determination of "what action can be taken on the basis of the evidence and the law," Assistant Attorney General Warren Olney III has assured an NAACP delegation headed by Roy Wilkins, executive secretary.

In a conference with Mr. Olney and other officials of the Department on September 7, NAACP spokesman urged the Federal government "to delay no longer in calling a halt to the jungle fury unloosed in Mississippi."

The group submitted an eight-point memorandum summarizing the principal events in the reign of terror which has prevailed in Mississippi.

"The wanton killing of the 14-year-old lad, Emmett Louis Till, on August 29, is the logical and inevitable culmination of a reign of terror which has been generated in the State of Mississippi throughout the year," the NAACP statement said.

It cited also the murders of Rev. George W. Lee on May 7 and Lamar Smith on August 13 because they refused to give up their right to vote. . . .

"All the matters submitted on the denial of the vote in Mississippi, the instances of intimidation, and the murders of two men, said to be connected with voting, are under investigation," Mr. Olney told the delegation. The Department will determine what actions can be taken on the basis of the evidence and the law when the investigation is completed." . . . (*Kansas City Call*, Sept. 16).

Two men accused of advocating racial integration . . . defied an "invitation" from their neighbors (in Tchula, Miss.) to move away before they cause another "Emmett Till wolf-whistle case."

Some 700 white men and women packed in a high school gymnasium . . . adopted a resolution (recently). It expressed the community's "opinion" that Dr. D. R. Minter, a physician who devotes much of his time to helping low-income groups, and A. E. Cox, co-operative farm manager, should get out of the heavily Negro farming area.

"We don't want a Sumner here," said state Rep.-elect J. T. Love in a reference to the Till murder trial at Sumner, Miss., . . .

Dr. Minter and Mr. Cox said they had made no move to comply with their fellow townsmen's suggestion that they leave. They said they had received no threats.

The meeting of Tchula residents was called to discuss reports that Dr. Minter and Mr. Cox favored racial mingling and that "certain strange racial relations" were practiced at Providence Farms, Mr. Cox's 2,700-acre co-operative plantation near here.

The meeting heard a tape recording of a statement made by Curtis Freeman, nineteen-year-old Negro, who was sentenced to six months' imprisonment today after he admitted using "vulgar and obscene language near a dwelling and in the presence of a white woman." The recording also said Negroes and whites went swimming together on the farm and that Dr. Minter and Mr. Cox preached racial mingling.

Dr. Minter and Mr. Cox attended the meeting voluntarily and denied the accusations made in the tape recording. The group nevertheless decided it would be "better" if they moved away. . . .

(*New York Herald Tribune*, Sept. 30)

NCC Resolution

The General Board of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A., reaffirming the oneness of our nation, expresses its consequent conviction that violation of human personality on racial grounds in any part of our country rests as a responsibility upon the whole nation, and that the consequences of such violations are visited upon us all.

We are deeply grieved at conditions which have been revealed by a chain of tragic events such as those which have recently occurred in the state of Mississippi. These events have produced anguish not only among their immediate victims, but among Christians everywhere, and especially among those who are giving themselves in heroic devotion to the realization of human justice.

We extend to those who have suffered and are suffering this expression of our Christian concern and compassion.

We humbly acknowledge that violations of human rights are not confined to any one section of the country. They place upon all of us the obligation to repent and to devote ourselves afresh to the attainment of just and righteous relations among the races of our nation.

We note that our Division of Christian Life and Work is continuing its study of this and related issues, and will bring its findings and recommendations to this Board.

(From *Minutes of General Board of the National Council of Churches*, October 5-6, 1955)

The matter in these pages is presented for the reader's information. Unless so stated, it is not to be construed as reflecting the attitudes or positions of the Department of Racial and Cultural Relations or of The National Council of Churches.

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